

# A Note on Ablative Subjects and Tense Restriction in Japanese

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## I . Introduction

Under the theory of Agree (Chomsky 2000, 2001), nominative Case is assigned under Agree with a finite T. If this is true of Japanese (Takezawa (1987) and numerous others), the subject marked with nominative (*ga*) in (1) has undergone Agree with the finite T (and raised to Spec, TP, due to the EPP of T).

- (1) [TP John<sub>i</sub>-ga [<sub>NP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> Mary-ni hon-o watasi]-ta]  
J.-NOM M.-DAT book-ACC hand-PAST  
'John handed the book to Mary.'

Moreover, it has often been suggested that there must be at least one nominative DP in a finite sentence (Shibatani 1977). A natural translation of this statement in terms of the theory of Agree would be (2).

- (2) A finite T always has a  $u\phi_{\text{comp}}$  (uninterpretable, complete  $\phi$ -feature).

$u\phi_{\text{comp}}$  must be valued and deleted by some DP, resulting in nominative Case marking on the part of that DP. However, we have sentences like (3), where the subject of the sentence is apparently marked by *kara* 'from'.

- (3) John-kara Mary-ni hon-o watasi-te oi-ta.  
J.-from M.-DAT book-ACC hand-TE put-PAST  
'John handed the book to Mary.'

The *kara*-subject construction, as I will call it, is a rarely discussed topic in the Japanese generative literature.<sup>1)</sup> On the face of it, immediate questions arise: Why is *kara* 'from' a possible marking on the subject *John*, if it really is a subject? What happens to the requirement for nominative Case assignment (2), if there really isn't any element assigned

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1) For description, see Cho (1995). Inoue (1998, 2002) and Ueda (2003) are the only theoretical works I am aware of. Ito (2001) is cited by Inoue (2002) as a descriptive work, but I have not been able to access it.

nominative? Or is there a null element that serves as the assignee of nominative Case?

Through the observation of such “*kara*-subject” constructions Inoue (1998, 2002) concludes that nominative Case is not structurally assigned by T. I propose, pace Inoue, that the *kara*-subject construction does *not* show that T plays no role in nominative Case assignment in Japanese. On closer scrutiny, the choice between *kara* and *ga* markings does affect the realization of T. Specifically, I explore the possibility that *kara*-subjects are inherently Case-marked in Spec,*v*P and Agree with T, in a way parallel to recent analyses of quirky subjects in other languages. This assumption explains why (i) the *kara*-subject has the subjecthood (while other arguments do not), (ii) the *kara*-subject is located lower in the structure than nominative subjects, and (iii) the construction is incompatible with simple tense marking on the verb.

Section II introduces the definition of the construction to be discussed here and its basic features. In section III the *kara*-marked phrase is shown to have the subject properties and to be located lower in the structure than nominative subjects. Section IV provides an analysis of the derivation for the *kara*-subject construction based on the theory of Agree and deduces the properties of the construction introduced so far. Section V concludes the paper.

## II . The Definition and Basic Characteristics

I will use the term “*kara*-subject construction” as defined in (4).

- (4) *Kara*-subject construction: An active sentence where the Agent argument is marked with *kara* ‘from’.

There are several basic characteristics of this construction worth mentioning, each of which I will turn to below. First, the class of verbs that can occur in *kara*-subject constructions are typically ditransitive verbs like *okur(u)* ‘send’, which take a dative-marked Goal and an accusative-marked Theme. When the accusative element is a verbal noun (e.g. *tyuui* ‘caution’) that goes with the light verb *su(ru)* ‘do’, the verbal noun can be incorporated into the light verb, yielding a verb that only takes a dative argument (*tyuui-su(ru)* ‘give-caution’). (5a) summarizes the characteristics of the verbs in terms of their argument structure, and (5b) is a short list of verbs compatible with this construction.

- (5) a. The verb takes Agent and Goal (and Theme).  
 b. *okur(u)* ‘send’, *yuzur(u)* ‘transfer’, *hanas(u)* ‘talk’, *tutae(ru)* ‘tell’, *tanom(u)* ‘ask (sb for sth)’, *ayamar(u)* ‘apologize’, *tyuuisu(ru)* ‘give caution’,...

The existence of a dative Goal argument, it appears, is essential to the licensing of *kara*-subjects. Verbs which only take an accusative argument are not compatible with a

*kara*-subject.<sup>2)</sup> (The sentence is acceptable with the reading of “initiation”, which is irrelevant; see note 3.)<sup>3)</sup>

Second, as Inoue (2002) points out, who attributes the observation to Ito (2001), (7) holds.

(7) Both Agent and Goal are animate.

That the Agent argument should be animate is self-evident and seems to be a universal semantic fact. That the Goal argument should be animate suggests that the dative argument of this construction is a Goal/high applicative argument rather than a Location/low applicative argument in the sense of Marantz (1993) and Pylkkänen (2002) (see also Miyagawa and Tsujioka 2004), thus comparable to the indirect object of the double object constructions in English (a parallelism noted also by Inoue (2002)). Thus, the *kara*-subject is disallowed when the *ni*-marked element is unambiguously a Location, not a Goal, as in (8); here the verb *hakob(u)* ‘carry’ does not take an animate Goal but an inanimate Location. Note that the nominative subject is perfectly acceptable.

(8) John-ga/\*-kara genkan-ni nimotu-o hakon-de oi-ta.  
J.-NOM/-from front.door-to package-ACC carry-TE put-PAST  
(Int.) ‘John had moved a package to the front door.’

Third, as the construction has an Agent argument by definition (4), the verb is always accusative (or unergative), conforming to Burzio’s generalization. It is therefore correctly predicted that it can be passivized.

(9) a. (Sudeni) John-kara Mary-ni sono hon-o watasi-te at-ta.  
already J.-from M.-DAT that book-ACC hand-TE exist-PAST  
‘John had already handed the book Mary.’  
b. Sono hon-ga (sudeni) John-kara Mary-ni watas-are-te at-ta.  
that book-NOM already J.-from M.-DAT hand-PASS-TE exit-PAST  
‘The book had already been handed to Mary.’

2) The only exceptions are *sikar(u)* ‘scold’ and *home(ru)* ‘praise’, which take an accusative object. Ito (2001) and Inoue (2002) argue that the accusative object of these verbs are semantically more like Goal. If this is the case, it is the existence of a Goal argument, not the surface dative marking, that is essential to the licensing of *kara*-subjects.

3) The following ‘initiating’ reading is irrelevant to the discussion.

(6) a. (#Saigoni) John-kara shawaa-o abi-ta.  
lastly J.-from shower-ACC pour-PAST  
‘John was the first to take a shower (#lastly).’  
b. John-wa (#saigoni) Chomsky-no ronbun-kara yon-da.  
J.-TOP lastly C.-GEN paper-from read-PAST  
‘John read Chomsky’s paper first (#lastly).’

Lastly, there is a restriction on the tense form of the verb, which has been noticed but left unexplained (Inoue 2002):

- (10) *Defective tense effect*: The verb in the *kara*-subject construction cannot be immediately followed by a finite T (T<sub>comp</sub>).

Thus, as in the following examples, simple past tense form is at most marginal in the *kara*-subject construction while the sentence is perfect with a nominative subject (11a). For a *kara*-subject to be possible, the main verb must be embedded by some aspectual, modal, or conditional expressions, all of which require the verb to be in some non-finite form.

- (11) a. John-ga/??-kara Mary-ni hon-o watasi-ta.  
 J.-NOM/-from M.-DAT book-ACC hand-PAST  
 ‘John handed the book to Mary.’  
 b. John-kara Mary-ni hon-o watasi-te {oi/at/yat/simat}-ta.  
 J.-from M.-DAT book-ACC hand-TE {put/exist/give/put.away}-PAST  
 ‘John handed the book to Mary.’ (with varied aspectual meanings)  
 c. John-kara Mary-ni hon-o {watas-u /\*watasi-ta} koto-ga deki-ru.<sup>4)</sup>  
 J.-from M.-DAT book-ACC hand-PRES hand-PAST NMLZ.COMP-NOM can-PRES  
 ‘John can hand the book to Mary.’  
 d. [John-kara Mary-ni hon-o {watas-eba/watasi-tara}] i-i.  
 J.-from M.-DAT book-ACC hand-if hand-if good-PRES  
 ‘It would be good if John hands the book to Mary.’

There is, however, a further complication: this restriction seems to hold only to third person *kara*-subjects. If the *kara*-subject is first or second person, simple tense forms are allowed:

- (12) a. Watasi-kara Mary-ni hon-o watasi-masi-ta.  
 I-from M.-DAT book-ACC hand-POLITE-PAST  
 ‘I handed a book to Mary.’  
 b. Anata-kara Mary-ni hon-o watasi-masi-ta ne?  
 you-from M.-DAT book-ACC hand-POLITE-PAST TAG.Q  
 ‘You handed a book to Mary, didn’t you?’

Due to space limitation I will not fully handle this exception, but suggest a possible analysis at the end of section IV.

4) I follow Fujii (2006: 13) in assuming that “[t]ensed subordinate clauses in Japanese are [-finite] if and only if their predicate does not alternate between the present tense form [-ru] and past tense form [-ta].”

### III. *Kara*-Phrase as the Subject

In this section I will briefly review the status of the *kara*-marked phrase in sentences like (3). The observations are basically attributable to Inoue (1998, 2002), though the examples and the details of the argument are my own.

Since Japanese allows null subjects, one might wonder if the *kara*-subject construction actually has an empty pronoun, call it *pro* for explicitness, that Agrees with T instead of the *kara*-phrase, and the *pro* is somehow coindexed with the *kara*-phrase, as in (13). If this is true the *pro* may serve as the (unpronounced) nominative argument, satisfying T's requirement to assign Case (2).

- (13) a. *pro<sub>i</sub>* John<sub>i</sub>-kara Mary-ni hon-o watasi-te oi-ta.  
           J.-from      M.-DAT book-ACC hand-TE put-PAST  
       b. John<sub>i</sub>-kara *pro<sub>i</sub>* Mary-ni hon-o watasi-te oi-ta.  
           J.-from            M.-DAT book-ACC hand-TE put-PAST

That this is not true, however, can be shown by the simple fact that no overt nominative argument can cooccur with a *kara*-subject in any position in the sentence, as in (14). If there were a nominative *pro*, an overt argument also should be licensed by being assigned Case.

- (14) a. \*{zibun<sub>i</sub>/kare<sub>i</sub>/John<sub>i</sub>/Bill<sub>j</sub>}-ga John<sub>i</sub>-kara Mary-ni tyuuisi-te oi-ta.  
           self/he/John/Bill-NOM      J.-from      M.-DAT caution-TE put-PAST  
       b. \*John<sub>i</sub>-kara {zibun<sub>i</sub>/kare<sub>i</sub>/John<sub>i</sub>/Bill<sub>j</sub>}-ga Mary-ni tyuuisi-te oi-ta.  
           J.-from      self/he/John/Bill-NOM      M.-DAT caution-TE put-PAST

It is concluded, then, that there is no unpronounced argument in the structure and it is the *kara*-phrase itself that receives the Agent  $\theta$ -role. Note, in passing, that we do not exclude the possibility that there is a null expletive, but this possibility does not undermine our conclusion that the Agent  $\theta$ -role is assigned to the *kara*-phrase, as expletives cannot bear any  $\theta$ -role by definition. We will turn to this possibility at the end of section IV.

Now let us turn to the subjecthood of *kara*-subjects. *Kara*-subjects pass the classical tests of subjecthood. First, *kara*-subjects as well as nominative subjects can bind the subject-oriented reflexive *zibun*.

- (15) John<sub>i</sub>-ga/-kara Mary<sub>j</sub>-ni [zibun<sub>i</sub>/\*<sub>j</sub>]-no ronbun]-o watasi-te oi-ta.  
       J.-NOM/-from    M.-DAT    self-GEN    paper-ACC hand-TE put-PAST  
       ‘John handed Mary self’s paper.’

By contrast, non-Agent (Source) *kara*-phrases cannot bind *zibun*.

- (16) \*John-ga Mary<sub>i</sub>-kara [zibun<sub>i</sub>-no hon]-o kari-ta.  
 J.-NOM M.-from self-GEN book-ACC borrow-PAST  
 ‘John borrowed self’s paper from Mary.’

Second, the *kara*-subject can induce subject honorification (17a). No other argument in the clause (17b) or Source *kara*-phrases (18) cannot.<sup>5)</sup>

- (17) a. Sensei-kara John-ni hon-o o-kasi-ni nat-te simat-ta.  
 Professor-from J.-DAT book-ACC HON-lend-to become-TE put.away-PAST  
 ‘Professor lent a book to John.’  
 b. # John-kara sensei-ni hon-o o-kasi-ni nat-te simat-ta.  
 J.-from Professor-DAT book-ACC HON-lend-to become-TE put.away-PAST  
 ‘John lent a book to Professor.’
- (18) # John-ga sensei-kara hon-o o-kari-ni nat-ta.  
 J.-NOM Professor-from book-ACC HON-borrow-to become-PAST  
 ‘John borrowed a book from Professor.’

What are we to make of the fact that the *kara*-subject has these subject properties? Along the lines of Chomsky (1995) and Ura (2000), we assume the following:

- (19)  $\alpha$  has the subject grammatical functions of a clause  $\beta$  iff  $\alpha$  Agrees with the T that heads  $\beta$ .<sup>6)</sup>

Given that the *kara*-subject has the subject properties, we conclude that it Agrees with a T.

At this point I have to make clear my assumptions as to the structures of canonical examples I have been using, like (3). Due to the defective tense effect (10), which I will account for in section IV, the sentence has to contain auxiliary forms of some sort, typically

5) Subject honorification on verb V is expressed by ‘*o*-V-*ni* become’, where *o*- is an honorification prefix, and *-ni* a suffix homophonous to dative Case marker or postposition ‘to’. See Toribio (1990) for an analysis of honorification as instantiation of agreement.

Interestingly, *kara*-subjects cannot trigger object honorification, while Source *kara*-phrases can.

(i) a. # Sensei-kara John-ni hon-o o-kasi si-te simat-ta.  
 Professor-from J.-DAT book-ACC HON-lend do-TE put.away-PAST  
 ‘Professor lent a book to John.’

b. John-ga sensei-kara hon-o o-kari si-ta.  
 J.-NOM Professor-from book-ACC HON-borrow do-PAST  
 ‘John borrowed a book from Professor.’

If Boeckx and Niinuma (2004) are on the right track in claiming that object honorification is an instantiation of Agree with *v*, this fact shows that the *kara*-subject is not inside the c-command domain of *v*, which is in harmony with our argument that it stays in Spec,*v*P.

6) In fact, Ura’s (2000) proposal is more elaborate in that the checking relation for each of T’s features is responsible for the subject grammatical function associated with that feature. This is going to be relevant in accounting for the relevance of person to the control of the missing subject of adjunct clauses discussed at the end of section IV.

an aspectual expression of the form  $V_1\text{-}te\text{-}V_2$ , where  $V_1$  is the main verb and  $V_2$  an auxiliary verb. Following Nakatani (2004), I assume the “biclausal” analysis of such complex verbal structure, where the particle *te* is a realization of defective tense ( $T_{\text{def}}$ ) that takes the main verb  $vP$  as its complement and is selected by aspectual verb  $V_{\text{asp}}$ , as schematically shown in (20), omitting the arguments of the sentence.

(20)  $[TP [VP [TP [vP \dots v] T_{\text{def}}=te] V_{\text{asp}}] T_{\text{comp}}]$

The structure contains two  $T$ ’s, the embedded defective  $T$  realized as *te*, and the matrix complete  $T$ . Since there are two  $TP$ ’s involved, the fact that *kara*-subjects (and nominative subjects as well) have subjecthood only shows that it is in an Agree relation to either of the two  $T$ ’s.

However, there is evidence that the *kara*-subject stays in the lower verb phrase (=  $vP$  of (20)), suggesting that it Agrees with the lower, defective  $T$ . Ueda (2003) observes that when the *kara*-subject is a quantifier, it can be scopally ambiguous with respect to other quantifiers within  $VP$ , whereas the nominative subject quantifier unambiguously scopes over them.<sup>7)</sup>

(21) a. nominative subject: (some > every, \*every > some)

Dareka-ga dono tegami-mo okut-(te oi)-ta.  
 someone-NOM every letter send-TE put-PAST  
 (Lit.) ‘Someone sent every letter.’

b. *kara*-subject: (some > every, every > some)

Dareka-kara dono tegami-mo okut-te oi-ta.  
 someone-from every letter send-TE put-PAST  
 (Lit.) ‘Someone sent every letter.’

This fact shows that while nominative subjects are located in a position high enough to take scope unambiguously over elements inside  $VP$ , *kara*-subjects are located lower in the structure so that they can scopally interact with  $VP$ -internal elements. Note that the rigidity of scope is maintained even when the nominative version (21a) does not have the complex aspectual structure for the verb, indicating that being in the Spec of the  $TP$  immediately above the  $vP$  is sufficient for the purpose of wide scope taking. Thus, the availability of the narrow scope of the *kara*-subject in (21b), which has the complex structure (20), implies that the *kara*-subject is located even below the Spec of the *lower*  $T$ , which I take to be Spec, $vP$ .

7) I have slightly changed her examples, as her original ones are imperatives of the form  $V\text{-}te$  *kudasai*, a structure about which little is understood.

#### IV. Deriving the Defective Tense Effect

In this section I will delineate the derivation of the *kara*-subject construction with some explicit assumptions about the mechanism of Agree with a view to deriving the defective tense effect introduced in section II. The central proposal I would like to make is that the *kara*-marking of this construction comes from inherent Case marking of the Agent argument by the  $\nu$ , as in (22).

- (22) Only accusative  $\nu$ 's that select Applicative VP can optionally inherently Case-mark their Agent argument with ablative (*kara*).<sup>8)</sup>

This captures, first of all, the fact that only when the clause has a high Goal (which must be animate, in contrast to low Goal/Location) is the *kara*-marking on the subject possible (section II).

Let us see how the derivation of a *kara*-subject sentence (23) proceeds.

- (23) John-kara Mary-ni denwasi-te oi-ta.  
 J.-from M.-DAT phone-TE put-PAST  
 'John made a phone call to Mary.'

Suppose that the option of inherent *kara*-marking is applied to the  $\nu$ P structure. Then the  $\nu$ P would look like (24).

- (24) [ $\nu$ P John-from [ $\nu$ P Mary-DAT phone]  $\nu$ ]  
           Agent                   Goal
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I assume (25), basically following Chomsky (2000).

- (25) a. An inherently Case-marked DP has an interpretable, defective  $\phi$ -feature  $i\phi_{\text{def}}$  (as well as a structural Case feature  $u\text{Case}$ ); otherwise DP's have  $i\phi_{\text{comp}}$ .  
 b.  $i\phi_{\text{def}}$  cannot value  $u\phi_{\text{comp}}$  but can value  $u\phi_{\text{def}}$ .  
 c. PIC (Phase Impenetrability Condition): The complement of a phase head is inaccessible.  
 d. An accusative  $\nu$  is a phase head.

8) See, for example, Woolford (2006) for a discussion of  $\nu$  as an inherent Case assigner. See also Ura (1999) for an analysis of dative subject constructions in Japanese and Korean where an unaccusative  $\nu$  inherently Case-marks its Experiencer argument in its Spec.

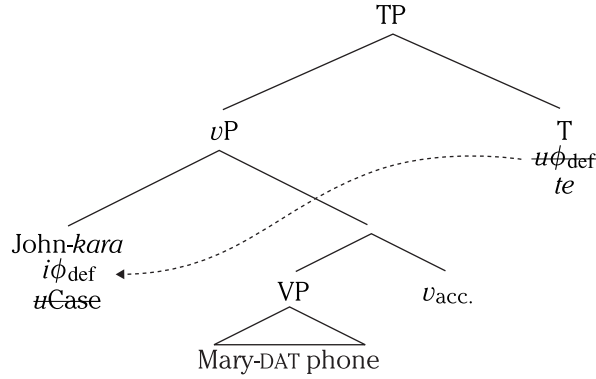
The *kara*-marking on the Agent argument is not a construction-particular mechanism, as this marker is sometimes employed to mark the de-thematized Agent argument in passives in this language.

(i) Mary-ga John-kara tyuu-is-are-ta.  
 M.-NOM J.-from caution-PASS-PAST  
 'Mary was cautioned by John.'



Now suppose that T is merged with the  $\nu P$  in (24), with either  $u\phi_{\text{comp}}$  or  $u\phi_{\text{def}}$ . Here the  $\nu$  is accusative by definition and is a phase head, so that elements inside VP are inaccessible from T. The only element that is in the search domain of T and can Agree with T's  $u\phi$  is the inherently Case-marked *kara*-subject. By the assumptions (25a) and (25b), the  $i\phi_{\text{def}}$  on the *kara*-subject cannot value a complete probe but can value a defective probe. Therefore the T directly merged with a *kara*-subject  $\nu P$  should be a defective one.

(26)



This explains why the *kara*-subject construction has the defective tense effect (10), repeated below.

- (10) *Defective tense effect*: The verb in the *kara*-subject construction cannot be immediately followed by a finite T ( $T_{\text{comp}}$ ).

By assuming that the defective T lacks an EPP feature, unlike the complete T, we can account for the fact that the *kara*-subject stays in its base-generated position, namely Spec,  $\nu P$ , as demonstrated at the end of section III.

After the defective T is merged and has its  $\phi$ -probe valued, the aspectual verb and the matrix  $T_{\text{comp}}$  are introduced. As the *kara*-marked Agent cannot value the  $u\phi_{\text{comp}}$  on the matrix T by assumption, something else must value it. I assume that an expletive *pro*, the null counterpart of English *it*, does this job.

- (27)  $[TP \text{ } pro_{\text{expl}} [VP [TP [\nu P \text{ Subj-}kara \dots \nu] T_{\text{def}=te}] V] T_{\text{comp}}]$

Note that as I have shown in section III, there cannot be an argumental *pro* that receives nominative Case, but I did not exclude the existence of a null expletive.<sup>9)</sup>

9) There is an interesting implication here. If  $T_{\text{comp}}$  could be directly merged with  $\nu P$  and host  $pro_{\text{expl}}$  in its Spec, thereby deleting its  $u\phi_{\text{comp}}$ , we would lose the account of the defective tense effect. However, since the goal of the probe-goal relation must be in the c-command domain of the probe,  $pro_{\text{expl}}$  (the goal) cannot be directly merged into Spec,TP but must start somewhere inside the complement of T. The fact that we have the defective tense effect implies that there is no position within the  $\nu P$  in which  $pro_{\text{expl}}$  is base-generated, but there is such a position somewhere above the lower TP, perhaps around the layer of the aspectual VP. It

It is important to note that in the *kara*-subject constructon, it is only the *kara*-subject that retains subjecthood. This is precisely because the *kara*-phrase is generated outside VP (a PIC barrier) and is accessible to T, in crucial contrast to other VP-internal arguments (Goal and Theme). An implication here is that even an Agree relation to a defective T entitles the *kara*-subject to subjecthood.

The derivation of the nominative subject construction, on the other hand, is identical to the *kara*-subject constructon except that Agent is not inherently Case-marked by  $\nu$  and hence has an  $i\phi_{\text{comp}}$ . This allows the T that directly merges with the  $\nu$ P to have  $u\phi_{\text{comp}}$  and have it deleted by Agreeing with the Agent. It follows that there is no defective tense effect in the nominative subject construction.

Returning to the problem mentioned in section II that the defective tense effect is not observed with first and second person *kara*-subjects, I suggest that it requires a fine-grained theory of the person feature and its relation to interpretation in order to fully handle it. A way would be to say that, as a corollary of principles governing the person feature and its relation, first and second person features are intrinsic to DP's that refer to the speaker or the hearer while third persons are non-intrinsic, at least in Japanese, so that inherent Case-marking has the effect of depriving a DP of its person feature only if the DP is to be interpreted as third person. If this is true, third person *kara*-subjects in fact lack the person feature and its  $\phi$ -feature is defective, while first/second person *kara*-subjects retain the person feature and therefore their  $\phi$ -feature is complete and can value  $u\phi_{\text{comp}}$  of T, obviating the defective tense effect.

There is a fact that the presence/absence of a person feature on *kara*-subjects may be responsible for. As in (28), a third person *kara*-subject cannot be construed as coreferent with the missing subject of an adjunct clause headed by *nagara* 'while' (indicated as 'PRO' for convenience), whereas first and second person subjects are eligible for that construal.

- (28) a. \*?John<sub>i</sub>-kara Mary-ni [PRO<sub>i</sub> biiru-o nomi-nagara] sekkyoo-o si-te i-ru  
           J.-from     M.-DAT           beer-ACC drink-while preaching-ACC do-TE be-PRES.  
           'John is preaching at Mary while drinking beer.'
- b. Boku<sub>i</sub>-kara Mary-ni [PRO<sub>i</sub> biiru-o nomi-nagara] sekkyoo-o si-te i-ru  
           me-from     M.-DAT           beer-ACC drink-while preaching-ACC do-TE be-PRES.  
           'I am preaching at Mary while drinking beer.'

Ura (2000) proposes that this ability is a subject grammatical function associated with  $\phi$ -feature checking relation with T. If our line of analysis is on the right track, the above fact implies that the ability is a function of not merely a  $\phi$ -feature checking relation but a checking relation with a *complete*  $\phi$ -feature, or more precisely with a person feature; a third person *kara*-subject does not Agree with T with respect to person because it lacks the

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will be interesting to explore whether this difference relates to the difference in the thematic nature of the main vs. aspectual/auxiliary verb phrases.

feature, and hence lacks the ability to control the missing subject, while first/second person subjects do Agree with respect to person, whereby they are endowed with the ability to control. This analysis of the person effect, if correct, amounts to saying that third person *kara*-subjects are in fact only partially “subject-like”, in that it lacks the above-mentioned ability precisely because it lacks the component of  $\phi$ -feature needed for the establishment of that grammatical function.

## V. Conclusion

In this paper I analyzed the *kara*-subject construction as an instance of inherent Case marking, in a way comparable to recent analyses of quirky subject constructions in other languages. The *kara* marking on the subject comes from inherent Case assignment by an accusative  $v$ , but inherently Case-marked elements has  $u$ Case and  $\phi_{\text{def}}$ , so that it needs to Agree with some probe but cannot value a complete probe. A natural candidate for such a probe is a defective T, which the *kara*-subject directly Agrees with. Note that the very fact that (contrary to Inoue’s (2002) conclusion) the *kara*-subject is related to a defective T through Agree accounts for the defective tense effect. Moreover, the lower positioning of the *kara*-subject (Spec, $v$ P) is deduced from the defectiveness of T (lack of EPP). Though the *kara*-subject stays inside  $v$ P, it is definitely distinguished from other VP-internal arguments in that it has subjecthood, a fact captured again by the Agree relation it has with the T (and the partiality of its subjecthood discussed at the end of the previous section reflects the defectiveness of the Agree relation).

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## A Note on Ablative Subjects and Tense Restriction in Japanese

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This paper discusses the syntactic properties of the *kara*-subject construction in Japanese, where the Agent argument is marked with *kara* ‘from’ and the verb is in active voice. I explore the possibility that the *kara* marking is due to inherent Case-assignment by *v*, and from this and other general assumptions about the theory of Agree (Chomsky 2000) I try to deduce many of the syntactic properties of the construction that are otherwise unexpected. As a direct consequence of being assigned an inherent Case, the *kara*-subject enforces Agree with a defective T, the effect being that the verb that assigns the  $\theta$ -role to the subject must in some sense be non-finite. Moreover, the Agree relation with T naturally entails the subjecthood of the *kara*-phrase (but not of other internal arguments). However, the defectiveness of the Agree relation causes the *kara*-subject to stay in its base-generated position (Spec,*v*P), accounting for its narrower scope as a quantifier. Thus, it is correctly predicted that the *kara*-subject has an ambivalent status in the sentence in that (i) like the run-of-the-mill nominative subjects, it is structurally high enough to have subjecthood, but (ii) it is not high enough to gain a salient scope over other arguments. If the analysis is on the right track, the construction does not suggest that Agree with T is not responsible for nominative Case assignment in Japanese, as Inoue (1998, 2002) argues based on this very construction, but it indicates that Agree *is* involved in the licensing of the subject in this language as well.